Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sterilization

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APIC CALIFORNIA APIC COORDINATING COUNCIL

Basics of Infection Prevention
2-Day Mini-Course
October – November 2011

Objectives

- Describe basic principles of cleaning, disinfection, sterilization
- Identify when to use cleaning, disinfection, or sterilization
- Describe how to monitor cleaning, disinfection and sterilization processes

Terminology

- Cleaning
  - general removal of debris (dirt, food, feces, blood, saliva and other body secretions)
  - reduces amount of organic matter that contributes to proliferation of bacteria and viruses
- Disinfection
  - removes most organisms present on surfaces that can cause infection or disease
- Sterilization
  - the killing or removal of all organisms

Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization in Healthcare Settings

- Practice standards are based on Spaulding's Classification system
- Healthcare devices and equipment designated as
  - Critical
  - Semi-critical
  - Non-critical
- Categories define level of reprocessing required

Critical Items

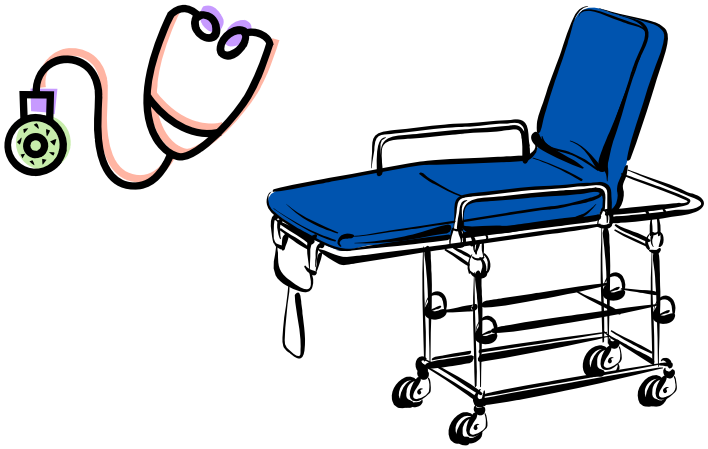
- Require sterilization
- Includes items that enter sterile tissue or the vascular system
- Examples include surgical instruments and accessories, biopsy forceps, cardiac and urinary catheters, implants, needles

Semi-Critical Items

- Require minimum high level disinfection (or sterilization)
- Includes items in contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes
- Examples include respiratory therapy equipment, anesthesia equipment, flexible and larnygoscopes, bronchoscopes, GI endoscopes, cystocopes, vaginal ultrasonic probes
- Cleaning process must precede high-level disinfection

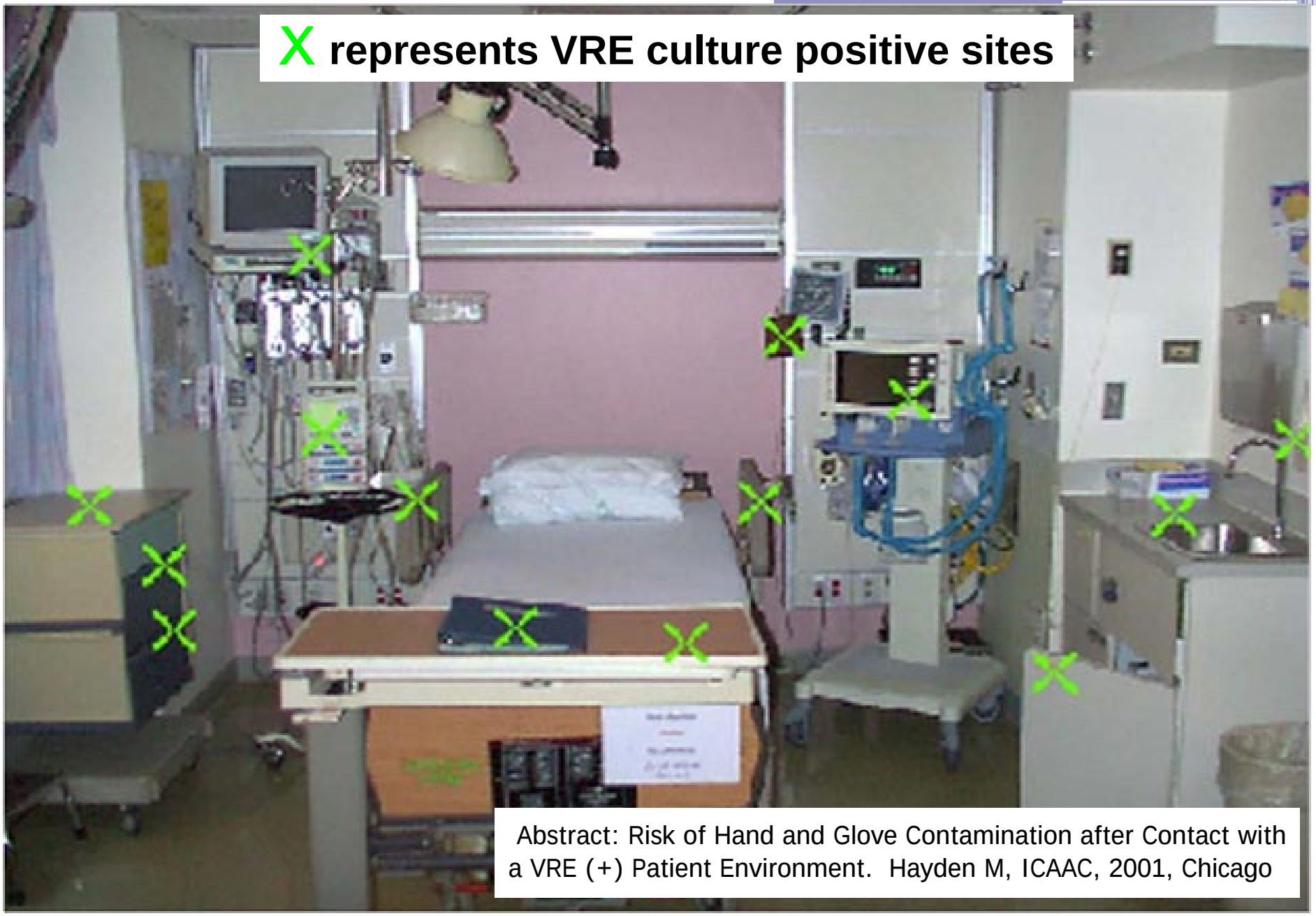
Non-Critical Items

- Require intermediate-level or low-level disinfection
- Includes items in contact only with intact skin
- Examples include BP cuffs, stethoscopes, durable mobile patient equipment



Environmental Cleaning

- Patient environment can facilitate transmission of bacteria and viruses
  - By direct contact
  - On hands of healthcare personnel
- Contaminated surfaces increase potential for transmission of bacteria and viruses between patients
- Items categorized as non-critical (intermediate or low disinfection) or require cleaning only


X represents VRE culture positive sites
Abstract: Risk of Hand and Glove Contamination after Contact with a VRE (+) Patient Environment. Hayden M, ICAAC, 2001, Chicago

Policy Considerations

- Include in policy all surfaces and equipment that can reasonably be expected to be contaminated by bacteria (high touch surfaces)
- Define responsibility and frequency for cleaning and disinfecting patient care equipment and surfaces
- Monitor compliance with policy
- Staff should be able to answer question “How do you know whether this item has been cleaned and/or disinfected?”
- Cleaned/disinfected items should be labeled (date/time)

High Touch Surfaces in Patient Rooms

- Considered non-critical
- Must be cleaned *then* disinfected on a regular basis
- Examples include:
  - Bedrails
  - Call bells
  - Telephones
  - TV remotes
  - IV pumps
  - IV poles
  - Toilets, commode chairs
  - Over bed tables
  - Light switches, door
  - Doorknobs
  - Respiratory and other bedside equipment

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Items Requiring *only* Cleaning

- Floors, walls, and windows
- Chairs and other furniture used by individuals who are clothed
- Private offices and other non-public, non-patient care areas

Clarify in policy what needs to be cleaned and not necessarily disinfected

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Monitor Environmental Cleaning Processes

- Bioluminescence
  - Monitors for light emissions produced if living organism present
  - Expensive
- Fluorescence
  - Monitors for chemical markers that fluoresce with ultraviolet (black) light if not removed during cleaning
- Culturing
  - Should *not* be done
  - Sometimes used during outbreak investigation
- Visual inspection
  - Make routine rounds and provide feedback to frontline staff

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sterilization of Medical Instruments and Devices

You CANNOT achieve disinfection or sterilization without pre-cleaning

- Bioburden must be reduced for processes to be effective

Clean all medical instruments and devices as a first step

- Remove visible soil
- May need to disconnect or separate instrument parts
- Avoid organic material drying on equipment by rinsing or soaking in an enzymatic solution

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Personal Protection

When cleaning soiled medical instruments, wear

- Long sleeved impervious gown
- Eyewear
- Mask or mask with faceshield
- Gloves
- Cap
- Chemical goggles (when mixing or changing solution)

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Disinfection - 1

- Eliminates or kills most bacteria, many virus types, some fungi (not prions)
- Cannot be accomplished without first cleaning
- Time-dependent process
- Levels of disinfection - high, intermediate, or low
- Hospitals must use EPA approved product for desired level of disinfection

Disinfection - 2

- Follow manufacturer's recommendations to achieve disinfection and to avoid medical device damage method
  - Use correct dilution – more is not better!
  - Use correct contact time
  - Use correct temperature
- Understand employee and environmental safety issues
  - Do not exceed exposure limits
  - Know permissible exposure levels
  - Assess compatibility with gloves, basins, other products

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EPA Registration of Disinfectants

- Labeled as high level vs. intermediate vs. low level
- May include degrees of approval
  - Limited approval, e.g. kills Hepatitis B and HIV but not approved for spores
- Select disinfectant based on what you are trying to accomplish
  - Environmental vs. medical device disinfection
- Can search EPA website by product name

  www.**epa**.gov/oppad001/chem**reg**index.htm

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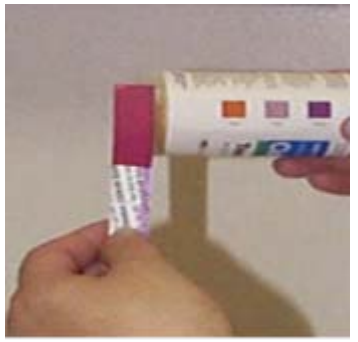
High-level Disinfection - Gluteraldehyde

- Ensure achievement of temperature requirements
- Test product each day of use
  - Can get diluted with frequent use
  - Follow facility policy
  - Test strips expire; monitor dates



- Change product as indicated by test and as manufacturer requires
- Maintain log records
- Ensure competency of staff

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Environmental Disinfectants - 1

- Phenolics
  - “Gold Standard” in healthcare
  - Toxicity concerns prohibit use in nurseries, NICU
  - Does not kill spores
- Quaternary ammonium compounds
  - Approved for specific pathogens (read the label!)
  - Affected by water hardness
  - Affected by bioburden

Correct dilution is critical to effectiveness.

Environmental Disinfectants - 2

- Iodophors
  - Can be used in food preparation areas
  - Inactivated by organic materials, e.g. blood
  - Can stain surfaces
- Chlorine (bleach)
  - Inactivated by organic materials, e.g. blood
  - Kills spores, e.g. *C. difficile*
  - Corrosive
  - Highly toxic (deadly) if combined with ammonia

Sterilization

Achieved by

- Steam
- Dry Heat
- Ethylene Oxide
- Peracetic Acid
- Plasma Gas (vaporized hydrogen peroxide)
- Glutaraldehyde (using higher concentrations and exposure times than for high-level disinfection)

Steam Sterilization - Autoclave

- Achieves rapid heating and penetration
  - Short exposure times (<20 minutes) but temperature must be maintained throughout
  - No toxicity to workers
  - Inexpensive
  - Can damage delicate instruments
- Items to be sterilized must be
  - Clean and free of protein (blood) or other organic material
  - Packaged so that the steam can penetrate
- Autoclave must be loaded correctly

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Rapid Cycle or Flash Sterilization

- "Unwrapped" steam sterilization
- Should only be used when necessary
  - Do not flash whole trays of instruments
  - Items must be used immediately
  - Avoid by keeping adequate supply of frequently dropped items
- Maintain records or "flash logs"
  - Include all implants
  - Requires same monitoring processes as routine steam sterilization in hospital
  - Use to support need for additional instruments

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Monitoring Sterilization

- Mechanical Indicators
  - Gauges, displays, printouts
  - Indicates if device working properly
  - Not indicator of sterility
- Chemical Indicators
  - Change color with timed exposure to heat, steam
  - Not indicator of sterility
  - Used to show items have gone through sterilization process
- Biological Indicators
  - Indicator of sterility
  - Kills bacterial spores on test strips or in vials/containers

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Storage of Sterile Items

- Protect sterility until ready to use
  - Store to protect packages from dust, moisture, falling on floor
  - Transport only covered, dry packages
  - Handle to protect package integrity
- Rotate sterile items first in, first out
- Store and label for effective recall system
- Expiration date vs. Event-related sterilization
  - Needs a program flex from L&C

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IP Role in Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sterilization

- Know the processes; update the policies
- Know directors of environmental services, sterile processing, operating room, endoscope services
- Know where all sterilization and disinfection is being done
  - May include
    - Radiology
    - GI dept
    - Cardiac cath lab
    - Wound care center
    - Outpatient clinics
    - Emergency room
    - Same day procedures
    - Ambulatory surgery
- Ensure staff know and follow contact times for products
  - Per manufacturer guidelines; on labels

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Questions?

For more information, please contact any HAI Liaison Team member

Thank you